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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/840,033	05/07/2004	Merton Hahne	2050505	7770
22824	7590	06/03/2005	EXAMINER	
DONALD R. SCHOONOVER 4211 ROLLING HILLS DRIVE NIXA, MO 65714-8771			WINNER, TONY H	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			3611	
DATE MAILED: 06/03/2005				

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/840,033

Applicant(s)

HAHNE ET AL.

Examiner

Tony H. Winner

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 17 March 2005.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-12 and 22 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☒ Claim(s) 22 is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-4 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☒ Claim(s) 5-12 is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date 5/7/04.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: _____.

Election

1. Applicant's election without traverse of species I is acknowledged. Claims 1-12 and 22 were said to be readable on the elected species, corresponding to figures 1-9. Claims 13-21 and 23 were said to be "cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer while requesting that the cancelled claims be reinstated and considered if generic claims 1 or 5 are allowed". While all cancelled claims may not be reinstated, new dependent claims may be added to depend on allowed generic claims. An action on the merits follows.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

2. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

Claims 1-4 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Parent (U.S. 5,765,851).

Parent discloses a self-aligning towing apparatus comprising:

(a) a towing vehicle connection mechanism connected to the towing vehicle, the towing vehicle connection mechanism defining a fore-to-aft oriented towing vehicle axis that is operatively fixed relative to the towing vehicle and to the towing vehicle connection mechanism;

(b) a towed vehicle connection mechanism connected to the towed vehicle, the towed vehicle connection mechanism defining a horizontal transversely oriented towed

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vehicle axis that is operatively fixed relative to the towed vehicle and to the towed vehicle connection mechanism; and

(c) an interconnecting mechanism connecting the towing vehicle connection mechanism to the towed vehicle connection mechanism, the interconnecting mechanism defining:

(1) an interconnection central point (figure 1), and

(2) an interconnection vertical axis (b—b) spaced rearwardly from the interconnection central point; and

(d) wherein the interconnecting mechanism is configured and structured to accommodate substantially all pitch and roll movements (figure 2), including any and all combinations thereof, between the towing vehicle axis and the towed vehicle axis, at and about the interconnection central point; and wherein the interconnecting mechanism is further configured and structured to accommodate substantially all yaw movements, between the towing vehicle axis and the towed vehicle axis, at and about the interconnection vertical axis.

With regard to claims 2-4, Parent discloses all of the claimed limitations.

Allowable Subject Matter

3. Claims 5-12 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.
4. Claim 22 is allowed.

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Conclusion

5. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communication from the examiner should be directed to Anthony H. Winner whose telephone number is (571) 272-6654. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday from 9:30 am to 6:30 pm. If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Lesley Morris, can be reached at (571) 272-6651. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is (703) 872-9306.

6. Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information-Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll free).

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is (571) 272-6584.


TONY WINNER
PATENT EXAMINER
5/27/05